

City of Alameda Planning Board  
City Hall  
2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 190  
Alameda, CA 94501

**Re: Draft Zoning Ordinance Amendments, for the North Park Street Planning Area**

Dear Planning Board:

The residents of the Wedge Community respectfully urge you to consider the need for open space/green space within our community. While we are moving forward at this critical time on the final Draft EIR, approving the effective zoning, and General Plan Amendments for the area between Oak Street, the Oakland Estuary, Tilden Way and Lincoln Avenue, we find it hard to believe that there is no mention of public or green space.

Firstly, the purpose of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is to maintain a quality environment for the people of the state of California. The intent of the Act is that the government takes steps to identify critical thresholds for the health and safety of the people in the community. It is in effect to regulate the activities of private individuals, businesses and public agencies to prevent environmental damage and provide a satisfying living environment for every Californian. The act requires public agencies to not approve projects as proposed if there are feasible alternatives to lessen the significant environmental effects of such projects. With that said, the rezoning as it currently stands, does not adhere to this intent of CEQA.

As residents of a mixed-urban/gateway area into the city of Alameda, which is in need of these changes to the General Plan, we are “wedged” between two busy main arteries (Tilden & Park), which bring a majority of the daily island’s traffic, mass transit, and commercial vehicles, so that all of Alamedan’s enjoy the Island life. Should not this small community, which is being carefully crafted into the city’s “gateway” be an example of our good communities across the Island? Shouldn’t the residents of the “wedge” community be allowed the same rights to open space just as much as the rest of the historic neighborhoods throughout Alameda?

Open space is not just an “amenity”, they are necessary pieces of the urban fabric to provide people with recreation, relaxation, community and essential respite from the daily bustle of the city life. Parks and open space convalesce our physical and social well-being. They strengthen and tie together our communities, and provide more appealing places to live and work. There is strong evidence that shows that access to open space has shown increase in health and a reduced risk of diseases such as heart disease, hypertension and diabetes. Furthermore, green space provides substantial environmental benefits! Trees reduce air pollution and water pollution; they reduce heat-island effect and manage storm water runoff. In addition, open space produces important social and community development

benefits. They offer space for low-income families, children and neighbors to feel a sense of community, reducing crime and juvenile delinquency. Ideas such as community gardens increase residents' sense of community ownership and stewardship, providing a focus for neighborhood activities, exposing local youth to nature, connecting people from diverse cultures and clean up vacant lots, along with building community leaders. Finally, green/open spaces provide passive zones in commercial districts. They increase the value of those districts by creating spaces for users to sit and pause or rest while they move through a downtown core.

The "wedge neighborhood" is made up of a dichotomy of minority groups, most of whom don't know the meaning of this public meeting tonight. Most people were enticed to live here merely because of the lower cost of most "starter homes", next to industrialized areas with few public amenities. Historically, the "wedge" neighborhood was the result of in-filling the urban fabric over time, allowing a roulette of businesses & industrial uses to squeeze in between the once historic structures that stood here for over a century. It's what gives this district character while also creating a challenge of allowing the correct zoning to co-exist with residential and open/space.

Finally public non-profit groups have had in place for some time now the idea of greening this area on their own. Why not take this great opportunity to merge forces with them and find space for land stewardship and provide the children of Alameda with an educational outdoor center where they can learn about urban agriculture and foodshed programs? Cities across the Bay, and the US have successfully integrated community garden programs quickly in the last few years, but Alameda seems to be behind the curve on the ideas of urban agriculture, and more concerned with urban in-filling.

As the Planning Board is taking the time to consider the creation of a New District Zone, we, the citizens of the "Wedge Community" would urge you to consider the following:

1. Adopt language in the final report for the creation of open/green space at an agreed ratio of 'x.x' acres of space per every 1,000 residents. Something that shows you are committed to providing open/green space in our community. (Cal State Parks suggestion 3 acres of park space per 1,000 residents)
2. Provide a document showing the possible location(s) of open/green space. Work with community groups to locate the best possible location. (Old Island High site is a good example)
3. Consider adding the possibility for housing density element above any new business along Park Street (where our transit corridor already exists).

Attached is a petition with 62 signatures, representing a large percentage of the residents of the neighborhood affected. We urge you to consider this matter before finalizing the **Final EIR for the North Park Street Planning Area and Associated Zoning Ordinance and General Plan Amendments**.

Sincerely,  
The 'Wedge' Neighborhood

We, the residents of the "Wedge Neighborhood", are left with a disadvantage or lack of access to open/green space within our community. As the city is considering finalizing the EIR for the North Park Street Planning Area and Associated Zoning Ordinance and General Plan Amendments, we would like them to consider the following points:

1. Adopt language in the final report for the creation of open/green space at an agreed ratio of 'x.x' acres of space per every 1,000 residents. Something that shows you are committed to providing open/green space in our community. (Cal State Parks suggestion 3 acres of park space per 1,000 residents)
2. Provide a document showing the possible location(s) of open/green space. Work with community groups to locate the best possible location. (Old Island High site is a good example)
3. Consider requirements for housing density element above any new business along Park Street (where our transit corridor already exists).

It is a primary concern of the neighborhood that there is a disregard for a historic neighborhood's access to open space, we, the undersigned would like the final document changed before it is presented to city council.

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